

Grief and Joy at Christmas



KAITLYN DONIHUE'S MONTHLY UPDATE



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Dear Friend,

When I was a child, the Christmas season always seemed like a magical time. Somehow, over the last several years, the season has lost some of its magic. I love the Christmas season, but I also feel a deep sadness.

Against the backdrop of a joy-filled season, the fact that children are dying seems even more horrifying. The reality that some women feel so desperate and alone that they resort to abortion feels even more heartbreaking. The knowledge that many men and women are struggling with guilt, shame, and the belief that Jesus cannot forgive their abortions feels even heavier.

In the hurry and flurry of this season, it is so easy to forget what we are celebrating. We are celebrating the birth of the one who came to redeem, heal, and restore sinful, broken human beings. Jesus came to earth to be born in a smelly stable among dirty animals because He cares about the hurting, broken woman who is considering abortion, and He cares about the man who is in despair because he forced his girlfriend to have an abortion. He cares about the drug addict, the prostitute, the person bagging your groceries, and the person down the street. The question is, do *we*?

Do we care enough to let these concerns interrupt our lives, inconvenience us, sadden us?

Jesus cared so much that He gave up his throne in heaven to come to earth, and that is what we are celebrating. It is my prayer that we won't merely celebrate Jesus' birth as a nice idea and go on with our lives, but that we will be changed by it. If Jesus cared so much and we claim to be His people, we should care too.

Jesus gave us an incredible gift that first Christmas. It was the gift of Himself. Instead of merely celebrating that gift and keeping it to ourselves, may we share it with others. As we rejoice this Christmas season, may we also take time to grieve for those who have not received the precious, life-giving gift of Jesus.

It may sound strange that I am asking you to take time to grieve even during Christmas, but I think we underestimate how valuable that is. We underestimate the power of grieving that which God grieves. Jesus wept after Lazarus died. He wept over Jerusalem because He longed for the people to repent and turn to Him and they would not. If Jesus took time to grieve that which was not as it should be, shouldn't we?

As Christians, we are called to a paradox. On the one hand, we are called to rejoice always. Jesus has overcome the world. No matter what is unfolding around us, we have reason to rejoice. And yet, we are called to have God's heart for a lost and broken world. Rejoicing and grief, joy and sorrow. Strangely, this is our calling. So this Christmas, as we celebrate the joy-filled story of our Lord's birth in Bethlehem, may we also remember the anguish of His death at Calvary and what His birth and death accomplished for us and for all those in anguish around us.

In Christ,

Kaitlyn

